

An Introduction to the Volume 5, Number 1 of

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Thank you for subscribing to *Behavior Analysis in Practice*. *BAP* is a translational publication designed to provide science-based, best-practice information relevant to service delivery in behavior analysis. The mission of the *BAP* editorial team is to publish empirically validated best practices in an accessible format that describe not only what works but also the challenges of implementation in practical settings. We also aim to provide new readers with an understanding of the technology and the common values of practicing behavior analysts.

The number of different contexts in which behavior analysts may practice is boundless, and behavior analysts address arguably limitless socially important problems. Nevertheless, the majority of practicing behavior analysts work in schools and clinics providing evidence-based practices to persons with intellectual disabilities or autism. This state of affairs presumably exists because of the vast support for these applications of behavior analysis and, at least partly, because of the explicit focus on the unique problems associated with autism and intellectual disabilities in many behavior analytic graduate training programs. There are, however, many other members of society who are also struggling with what are fundamentally problems of learning and who would likely benefit from the practical and personalized approach common across practicing behavior analysts. In our lead article, Linda LeBlanc, Megan Heineke, and Jonathan Baker have identified other consumer groups who could readily benefit from behavior analytic services. These authors have provided readers with a task analysis for expanding their scope of practice to other populations in a responsible manner. Readers interested in exploring new practice areas will find encouragement and direction in this discussion piece.

There are two research articles in the current issue. Despite the fact that each focuses on very different problems, both articles should provide practitioners with assessment strategies that will ultimately improve the quality of life for the children and adults they serve. Marsha Parsons, Dennis Reid, Erik Bentley, Amy Inman, and Perry Lattimore described a process they used to identify and validate individualized indices of happiness for three adults with autism. These authors have provided a cogent rationale for making the effort to identify individualized indicators of happiness for persons with minimal language repertoires and for validating them. The process described is thorough, but brief, and can be accomplished in routine contexts.

Barbara Janine Davis and her colleagues at the Kennedy Krieger Institute also describe an assessment process that can be accomplished in routine contexts, but theirs provides a solution to the problem of undifferentiated functional analyses, which may be caused to some extent by the brevity of typical functional analyses. By directly observing behavior in contexts in which one or a few environmental variables are altered, behavior analysts are able to detect the general reason why problem behavior is occurring. This part of the overall functional assessment process, termed a functional analysis (Iwata, Dorsey, Slifer, Bauman, & Richman, 1982/1994; Iwata & Dozier, 2008) usually involves a child experiencing a particular context for brief time periods of 5 to 10 minutes. Differentiated rates of problem behavior, necessary for detecting the function of problem behavior, often occur in functional analyses despite the brevity of the distinct conditions. Nevertheless, there are occasions when responding either does not occur in the analysis or it occurs at low and variable rates across all contexts. Under these conditions, the behavior analyst is no closer to understanding why problem behavior is occurring than when they started the analysis. Barbara Janine Davis and her colleagues describe how differentiated analyses can be obtained by significantly extending the time period under which each functional analysis condition is implemented. This tactic of lengthening experience in the functional analysis conditions provides both the basis for designing an effective treatment and a baseline from which to evaluate the effects of the treatment. Behavior analysts charged with addressing low rate, but high intensity, problem behavior will find value in the procedures and outcomes described in this second research article.

Whether measuring affect, severe problem behavior, or any other socially important behavior, behavior analysts must be able to respond to their data quickly and effectively. In order to do so, behavior analysts need to be able to graphically depict their data quickly and effectively. Articles have been published that include useful task analyses for creating common behavior-analytic graphs using Excel software (see Carr & Bukholder, 1998 or Dixon et al., 2009). In this issue's technical article, Nicholas Vanselow and Jason Bourret expand on those task analyses by describing several interactive, computer-based tutorials they developed to allow first-time users to create good-looking behavior analytic graphs. The tutorial also yields important skills like floating the zero on the vertical axis and adding phase lines. These tutorials are available for download

on the *BAP* website at http://www.abainternational.org/Journals/bap_supplements.asp. In the article, the authors have described the required software to get these programs up and running for you and your staff and included a description of their evaluation of the program's efficacy.

Amanda Karsten not only decided to adopt a new textbook for her *Early Intensive Behavioral Intervention* course offered to doctoral students at Western New England University, she elected to organize her students to write a formal review of the book while completing her course. The product of that process is fortunately available in this issue. Dr. Karsten and her students provide brief summaries and analyses of each chapter in Mayville and Mulick's (2011) *A Review of Behavioral Foundations of Effective Autism Treatment*. The utility of each chapter for teachers and practitioners working with people with autism spectrum disorders (ASD) is highlighted in this review. This review should be useful for readers responsible for teaching others to provide evidence-based practices to people with an ASD.

In the final paper in this issue, I have provided a *Perspective* on the functional assessment process. The paper is an attempt to synthesize the existing methodological literature relevant to the functional assessment of problem behavior with my own practice commitments. The goals of the paper are to update readers on some exciting developments that have made a scientific and practical understanding of problem behavior possible while also encouraging readers who are charged with treating severe problem behavior to reflect on their own practices and develop their own set of methodological commitments. Please visit the supplemental materials page on the *BAP* website (http://www.abainternational.org/Journals/bap_supplements.asp) to obtain an example open-ended functional assessment interview that can be used to design efficient and individualized analyses. The relevance of this tool will be apparent from reading this issue's *Perspective*.

We are actively working with authors to generate useful supplemental materials and make them available on the journal website. I see this supplemental materials page developing into a go-to site for behavior analysts to obtain useful tools for their practice. There are two additional reasons to visit the website. The first is that there is a link to bring you to the articles published in past issues of *BAP*, which are available free of charge at PubMed Central (click on *BAP on PubMed Central* at <http://www.abainternational.org/BAinPractice.asp>). The second is that Stephanie Peterson and her team at Western Michigan University are poised to upload more *BAP*casts to the website. A new *BAP*cast should appear about every three weeks. Visit http://www.abainternational.org/Journals/bap_podcast.asp to listen to these interviews with *BAP* contributors.

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